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Environment and sustainable development

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 87 (see A/57/532, para. 2). Action on the item as a whole was taken at the 37th and 44th meetings, on 18 November and 11 December 2002. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/57/SR.37 and 44).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/57/L.40 and A/C.2/57/L.92

2. At the 37th meeting, on 18 November, the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its seventh special session" (A/C.2/57/L.40), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, by which it established the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme,

"*Recalling also* its resolutions 53/242 of 28 July 1999 and 56/193 of 21 December 2001 on the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-first session,

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"*Taking into account* the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development, in particular, Chapter XI on an institutional framework for sustainable development,

"*Recalling* relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation, in particular paragraph 140 (d), in which the General Assembly was invited to consider, at its fifty-seventh session, the important but complex issue of establishing universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme, adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002,

"*Recognizing* that the question of establishing the universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme requires a thorough analysis by the Member States and the United Nations system,

"*Having considered* the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its seventh special session as well as the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development,

"*Underlining* the unique role of the General Assembly, as the highest intergovernmental decision-making body of the United Nations, in giving consideration to the issue of establishing universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme and, therefore, the need for the General Assembly to consider all its implications, including legal, political, institutional, financial and system-wide implications, before making such a decision,

"*Reaffirming* the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the principal body within the United Nations system in the field of environment, which should take into account, within its mandate, the development needs of developing countries,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its seventh special session;

"2. *Emphasizes* the need to implement the recommendations to strengthen the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the provision of capacity-building for and technology transfer to developing countries, as decided during the seventh special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as paragraph 137 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development;

"3. *Expresses* its appreciation to the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance for its report as endorsed by the Governing Council at its seventh special session;

"4. *Takes note* of the agreement contained in the Plan of Implementation to fully implement the outcomes of decision I of the seventh special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on international environmental governance;

"5. *Invites* Member States, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as multilateral environmental agreements to submit their written comments on the issue of establishing universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, including its legal, political, institutional, financial and system-wide implications, to the Secretariat, and requests the Secretary-General, on the basis of those views, to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session;

"6. *Decides* to further consider at its fifty-eighth session the issue of establishing universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme;

"7. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, to submit a report on the implementation of other sections of decision I of the seventh special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular section D, and in supporting the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 53/242, and reiterates its desire that the reports on the work of the Environment Management Group be made available to the Member States for its consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session;

"8. *Notes* other decisions adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its seventh special session;

"9. *Reiterates* the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for the United Nations Environment Programme and, in this regard, underlines the continued need to increase United Nations regular budget funding for the cost of servicing the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in accordance with section B of decision I of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its seventh special session;

"10. *Requests* the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, to continue to contribute to sustainable development programmes and the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels, bearing in mind paragraph 127 of the Plan of Implementation;

"11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under constant review, to make further proposals towards strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme at Nairobi and to increase support to the United Nations Office at Nairobi to the levels of the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna."

3. At the 44th meeting, on 11 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Jan Kara (Czech Republic), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its seventh session" (A/C.2/57/L.92), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.40.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.92 (see para. 10, draft resolution I).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.92, draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.40 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/57/L.41 and A/C.2/57/L.86

6. At the 37th meeting, on 18 November, the representative of Tajikistan, on behalf also of Japan and the Russian Federation, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Activities undertaken in preparation for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003" (A/C.2/57/L.41). Subsequently, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Switzerland, Thailand and Uzbekistan joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 55/196 of 20 December 2000 proclaiming 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater, and resolution 56/192 of 21 December 2001 on the status of preparations for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003,

"*Recalling also* the relevant provisions of Agenda 21 and decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixth session, relating to freshwater, and, in particular, freshwater provisions in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2002,

"*Welcoming and encouraging* the partnerships related to freshwater announced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

"*Reaffirming* the Millennium development goal to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water and the goal of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation,

"*Recalling* its resolution 53/199 of 15 December 1998 on the proclamation of international years,

"*Noting* the efforts for the elaboration of the *World Water Development Report* and the preparations for the Third World Water Forum and the International Ministerial Conference, to be held in Japan in March 2003,

"*Taking note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General,

"1. *Welcomes* the activities undertaken by Member States, the Secretariat, the lead agencies, in particular the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, and other organizations of the United Nations system that are engaged in work related to freshwater, as well as major groups, in preparation for the observance of the International Year of Freshwater, and encourages them to continue and expand their efforts;

"2. *Encourages* all States, relevant international organizations and major groups to support activities related to the Year, inter alia, through voluntary contributions;

"3. *Also encourages* all Member States, the United Nations system and major groups to take advantage of the International Year of Freshwater to raise awareness of the strategic importance of freshwater resources for satisfying basic human needs and for health and food production and the preservation of ecosystems, as well as for economic and social development in general, and to promote action at the local, national, regional and international levels, and calls for high priority to be given to the serious freshwater problems facing many regions, especially in the developing countries;

"4. *Further encourages* partnerships between Member States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, major groups and the private sector to sponsor and promote the International Year of Freshwater and projects, including the dissemination of messages, the production of educational material and projects in the field;

"5. *Encourages* interested stakeholders, such as international organizations, major groups and others, to link their water-related activities to the International Year of Freshwater;

"6. *Calls upon* Member States that have not already done so to create national committees or designate focal points in their respective countries to facilitate and promote activities related to the International Year at the local and national levels;

"7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session an interim report on the activities undertaken for the International Year of Freshwater and to report on further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources."

7. At the 44th meeting, on 11 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Jan Kára (Czech Republic), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Activities undertaken in preparation for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003" (A/C.2/57/L.86), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.41.

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.86 (see para. 10, draft resolution II).

9. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.86, draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.41 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

10. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its seventh special session

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, by which it established the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Also recalling its resolutions 53/242 of 28 July 1999 and 56/193 of 21 December 2001 on the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-first session,

Having considered the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its seventh special session,[1]

Taking into account the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[2]

Recalling that in the Plan of Implementation the General Assembly was invited to consider, at its fifty-seventh session, the important but complex issue of establishing universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Underlining the unique role of the General Assembly, as the highest intergovernmental decision-making body of the United Nations, in giving consideration to the issue of establishing universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme and, therefore, the need for a thorough analysis by Member States and the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to enable the General Assembly to fully consider all its implications, including legal, political, institutional, financial and system-wide implications, before making a decision,

Reaffirming the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the principal body within the United Nations system in the field of environment, which should take into account, within its mandate, the sustainable development needs of developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its seventh special session, and the decisions contained therein;[1]

2. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance for its report as adopted by the Governing Council at its seventh special session;

3. *Recalls* the decision made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to fully implement the outcomes of decision 1 on international environmental governance adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its seventh special session;

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/57/25).

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

4. *Invites* Member States, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, and the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to submit to the Secretariat their comments on the important but complex issue of establishing universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, including its legal, political, institutional, financial and system-wide implications, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report incorporating those views to the General Assembly for its consideration before its sixtieth session;

5. *Reiterates* its desire to be informed on the work of the Environment Management Group;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, to continue to contribute to sustainable development programmes and the implementation of Agenda 21[3] at all levels, bearing in mind the mandate of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

7. *Reiterates* the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for the United Nations Environment Programme, and in this regard and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) underlines the need to consider adequate reflection of all administrative and management costs of the United Nations Environment Programme in the context of the United Nations regular budget;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery in an effective manner of necessary services to the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi.

Draft resolution II
Activities undertaken in preparation for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/196 of 20 December 2000 proclaiming 2003 the International Year of Freshwater, and its resolution 56/192 of 21 December 2001 on the status of preparations for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003,

Recalling also the provisions of Agenda 21,[4] the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session,[5] decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its

[3] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

sixth session,[6] relating to freshwater, and those contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[7]

Noting with interest the partnership initiatives voluntarily undertaken by some Governments, international organizations and major groups and announced at the Summit,

Recalling the commitment made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to launch programmes of action, with financial and technical assistance, to achieve the Millennium development goal on safe drinking water, namely, to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water, as outlined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[8] and the goal of the Summit to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation,[9]

Recalling also its resolution 53/199 of 15 December 1998 on the proclamation of international years,

Noting the efforts made in preparation for the Third World Water Forum and International Ministerial Conference, to be held in Japan in March 2003, and for the elaboration of the *World Water Development Report*,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,[10]

1. *Welcomes* the activities undertaken by States, the Secretariat, and the organizations, programmes and funds of the United Nations system that are engaged in inter-agency work related to freshwater and by major groups in preparation for the observance of the International Year of Freshwater, and encourages them to continue their efforts;

2. *Encourages* all Member States, relevant international organizations and major groups to support activities related to the year, inter alia, through voluntary contributions, and to link their relevant activities to the International Year of Freshwater;

3. *Also encourages* Member States, the United Nations system and major groups to take advantage of the International Year of Freshwater to raise awareness of the essential importance of freshwater resources for satisfying basic human needs and for health and food production and the preservation of ecosystems, as well as for economic and social development in general, and to promote action at the local, national, regional and international levels, and calls for high priority to be given to the serious freshwater problems facing many regions, especially developing countries;

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[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 9* (E/1998/29).

[7] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[8] See resolution 55/2, para. 19.

[9] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1), chap. I, resolution 2, annex, para. 25.

[10] A/57/132.

4. *Further encourages* voluntary partnerships among Member States, international organizations and major groups to promote activities related to the International Year of Freshwater;

5. *Calls upon* Member States that have not already done so to create national committees or designate focal points in their respective countries to facilitate and promote activities related to the International Year at the local and national levels;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to promote closer coordination to elaborate and support proposals and undertake activities related to the International Year of Freshwater;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.